

CONFIDENTIAL

State Dept. review completed

DD/FBIS

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R 021417Z FEB 81
FM AMEMBASSY MBABANE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1348
INFO RUEADCR/FBIS WASHDC
BT

^EZ1:

C O N F I D E N T I A L MBABANE 0324

E22:
E.O. 12065: RDS-1 2/2/11 (MATHERON, RICHARD C.), DR-M
TAGS: PINT, WZ
SUBJECT: FBIS INSTALLATION
REF: STATE 22390

1. DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER BEN NSIBANDZE WAS VERY STRAIGHT FORWARD IN BLAMING THE DELAY IN GOVERNMENT APPROVAL OF FBIS INSTALLATION ON CABINET'S STRONG PENCHANT TO ESCHEW RESPONSIBILITY AND TO REFER EVEN "SOME OF THE MOST TRIVIAL MATTERS" TO KING SOBUZA FOR DECISION. THIS WAS IN RESPONSE TO AMBASSADOR'S RAISING SUBJECT AT MEETING IN DPM'S OFFICE DURING MORNING OF FEBRUARY 2. AMBASSADOR HAD POINTED OUT THAT OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS HAVE BEEN DISCUSSING MATTER OFF AND ON FOR NEARLY TWO YEARS AND THAT HE HAD JUST LAST WEEK RECEIVED INSTRUCTIONS FROM DEPARTMENT ASKING HIM TO RAISE THE SUBJECT ONCE AGAIN. AMBASSADOR POINTED OUT THAT HE WAS PREPARED TO RENEW FORMAL REQUEST, ORIGINALLY MADE ON JUNE 7, 1978, BUT THOUGHT IT WAS BEST TO SOUND OUT DPM FIRST ON POSSIBLE REASON FOR DELAY SINCE SAMPLE CORRESPONDENCE (WITH IVORY COAST) WAS TRANSMITTED LAST SEPTEMBER TO ^DPM'S PERMSEC AT HIS REQUEST.

2. DPM EXPLAINED THAT HE HAD TAKEN UP MATTER WITH CABINET AGAIN FOLLOWING AMBASSADOR'S SEPTEMBER DEMARCHE AND THAT CABINET WAS FAVORABLY DEPOSED TO GO AHEAD. NEVERTHELESS, THERE WAS SOME LACK OF UNDERSTANDING BY SOME CABINET MEMBERS ON WHAT ALL MIGHT BE INVOLVED (E.G., WHETHER INSTALLATION MIGHT BE PHYSICALLY TOO BIG TO INCITE CRITICISM FROM OTHER COUNTRIES) SO -- OUT OF FEAR OF A POSSIBLE SCHODING FROM KING FOR NOT HAVING CONSULTED HIM -- CABINET ASKED SENIOR LIAISON OFFICER MNISO TO DO SO. NSIBANDZE -- IN RATHER UNCHARACTERISTIC FASHION -- WENT ON TO APOLOGIZE FOR WAY SWAZI GOVERNMENT WORKS, ESPECIALLY KING'S OVERINVOLVEMENT IN MUNDANE MATTERS AND HIS SLOWNESS IN REACHING DECISIONS. "THERE ARE MANY, MANY MATTERS WHICH HAVE BEEN WAITING LONGER THAN THIS ONE," HE COMMENTED.

3. AMBASSADOR COMMENTED THAT INTERNAL FUNCTIONING OF SWAZI GOVERNMENT WAS, OF COURSE, PURELY SWAZI AFFAIR BUT THAT HE DID HOPE CONTINUING INTEREST OF USG UNDER NEW ADMINISTRATION IN FBIS INSTALLATION COULD BE BROUGHT TO HIS MAJESTY'S ATTENTION. DPM READILY AGREED TO PROD SENIOR LIAISON OFFICER, WHO JUST RETURNED LAST WEEK FROM FAR ^EASTERN JUNKET, AND TO GO BACK TO PRIME MINISTER ON HOW BEST TO PROCEED. DPM KEPT REITERATING THAT DELAY WAS DUE PURELY TO SLOWNESS OF SWAZI DECISION MAKING PROCESS AND IN NO WAY SHOULD WE FEEL THAT THEY WERE TRYING TO PASS US A "SECRET" (HIS EXPRESSION) MESSAGE OF DISAPPROVAL OF PROJECT.

4. AMBASSADOR AND POL/ECON OFFICER OFFERED REASSURANCES THAT EMBASSY STANDS BY TO RESPOND TO ANY ADMINISTRATIVE, TECHNICAL OR FOR THAT MATTER POLITICAL CONCERNS OF CABINET MEMBERS OR NOW OF HIS MAJESTY. IF NEED BE FBIS DIRECTOR CHANDLEE WOULD COME TO SWAZILAND TO ANSWER QUESTIONS. DPM MENTIONED THAT SWAZI CABINET HAD BEEN FAVORABLY IMPRESSED BY EMBASSY'S HAVING REQUESTED PERMISSION TO OPEN INSTALLATION SINCE SOME COUNTRIES WOULD JUST GO AHEAD AND OPERATE SECRETLY. THIS POINT WOULD BE MADE TO KING. AS MEETING ENDED, DPM COMMENTED, "TWO YEARS ARE A LONG TIME," AND HELD OUT HOPE HE WOULD BE BACK TO US WITHIN A FEW WEEKS.

5. EMBASSY VERY MUCH APPRECIATES USEFUL AND TIMELY INSTRUCTIONS INCLUDED REFTEL AND WILL CONTINUE TO FOLLOW-UP WITH PM AS WELL AS DPM AS THE OCCASION PRESENTS ITSELF. MATHERON